

# INFORMATION FOR THE PRESS

## United States Department of Agriculture

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### FEDERAL-STATE PLAN FOR WILDLIFE RESTORATION, NOW WELL UNDER WAY

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Forty-seven States have indicated that they wish to participate in the new Federal-State cooperative plan for wildlife restoration, reports the Bureau of Biological Survey, U. S. Department of Agriculture. The bureau is administering the program.

Under the Pittman-Robertson Act, approved in 1937, the Congress appropriated \$1,000,000 to inaugurate the program in the year begun July 1, 1938. The funds are available for conducting studies in wildlife management, developing and improving publicly owned or leased areas, and purchasing other lands desirable for wildlife restoration.

Proposals for 67 projects have been submitted by 31 States. Of these, 32 have been approved and funds set aside in the U. S. Treasury for planned work. The others, dealing largely with land-purchase and development proposals, are being approved as rapidly as the States assemble and submit their project plans, specifications, and estimates.

The early projects submitted by the States were predominantly for management studies. Texas and New York are making game surveys. Colorado is making a detailed study of deer and elk; Utah, beavers; Wyoming, bighorn sheep; Pennsylvania, fur animal resources; Massachusetts, black ducks and Canada geese on the coastal waters; Virginia, the distribution of wild turkeys; Vermont, the abundance of game from season to season; Michigan, the management of raccoons; and New Hampshire, a combination demonstration and research program with particular emphasis on the ring-necked pheasant.

Several States started projects for improving and developing public lands for wildlife purposes. Utah was the first with the Weber River Delta area approved July 23, 1938. Oklahoma and Nebraska are restocking game birds on areas providing suitable habitat but on which seed stock is inadequate. The areas are under lease to the State and are closed to hunting. The Virginia Game Commission is now purchasing deer to restock areas closed to hunting in the Thomas Jefferson and George Washington National Forests.

Tennessee undertook the first large acquisition program under the Federal-aid program. It is in the process of purchasing 18,000 acres of excellent wildlife habitat 16 miles west of Nashville. Pennsylvania is purchasing 9,000 acres of land embracing 16 tracts in 9 counties. These lands will be integrated with the existing game management areas controlled by that State.

A State's participation depends on legislative assent to the Act and upon the enactment of wildlife-conservation laws, which shall include a prohibition against the diversion of license fees paid by hunters for any purpose other than the administration of the State fish and game department.

In accordance with the law governing activities under the cooperative wildlife restoration program, the participating States through their Fish and Game Departments first submit project proposals. After approvals are accorded and the planned work has been satisfactorily completed, the States are authorized to request reimbursement for 75% of the project costs. All reimbursement claims must be supported by accurate cost accounting records.

The amount of the funds available to a State depends on the size of the State and the number of hunting licenses sold there. Although \$1,000,000 was appropriated to get the program started the first year, the Pittman-Robertson Act provides that the Congress may appropriate annually for the wildlife restoration program an amount equal to the revenue accruing from the 10 percent Federal excise tax on firearms and ammunition. This tax produces about \$3,000,000 annually.